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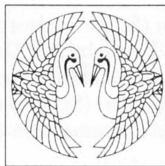
Front cover:

The portrait of the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great (r. 324—337), the founder of the Byzantine Empire. Miniature from a Christian-Arabic manuscript entitled *al-Durr al-manzūm fī tārikh mulūk al-Rūm* (C 358) in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, fol. 11b, 11.8 × 9.5 cm.

Back cover:

- Plate 1.** Portrait of two Roman Emperors — Stauracius (r. 811) and Michael I (r. 811—813). Miniature from the same manuscript, fol. 101b, 11.9 × 7.5 cm.
- Plate 2.** Portrait of the Roman Emperor Leo VI the Wise (r. 886—912). Miniature from the same manuscript, fol. 120a, 11.2 × 10.0 cm.

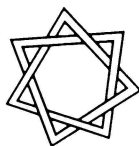
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BOOK REVIEWS

Scribes et manuscrits du Moyen-Orient, sous la direction de François Déroche et Francis Richard. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1997, 399 pp.

In June 1994, the Bibliothèque nationale de France (henceforth — BNF), known for its stimulating initiatives in the field of codicology, organised an international colloquium on manuscripts of the Near East. The publication under review here was prepared on the basis of papers delivered at the colloquium. The materials, in both French and English, each introduced by a short summary in the second language, are grouped in four thematic sections. Most of the papers are characterised by a striving to diversify and perfect methods of manuscript study. This finds its reflection in stressed attention to detail in the examination of individual manuscripts and in the compilation of information about large numbers of manuscripts into tables and diagrams. The book is notable for its high standard of typography, and photographic plates presenting manuscripts from various collections, mostly from the BNF, are well reproduced (the list of illustrations at the end runs to more than 130 items).

Six papers make up the first group of contributions under the heading “Les matériaux du livre”. When reports circulated that fragments of ancient books and bindings had been discovered between the ceiling and roof of the Great Mosque in Šan‘ā’ (Yemen), they sparked a sensation. Now Ursula Dreihholz reports on the results of her long years of research of the finds and provides a detailed description of the surviving parts of three wooden bindings or, more accurately, cases for books. Fragments of inscriptions in Kufic script on the back covers were discovered and deciphered by her. The author advances a hypothesis that the bindings date to the ninth century A.D.

“Les codex de la bible hébraïque en pays d’islam jusqu’à 1200: formes et formats” by Michèle Ducan and Colette Sirat (Paris) presents in table form data on the dimensions of a large number of manuscripts from the Cairo *genizah*, which date from the tenth to twelfth centuries. The manuscripts are currently stored in the National Library of Russia (St. Petersburg) and Cambridge.

Adam Gacek’s (Montreal) contribution deals with the contents of a section on the art of book-binding from a manuscript on art and crafts which is ascribed to al-Malik al-Muzaffar (d. 694/1294), a Yemeni ruler of the Rasūlid dynasty. The author studied the text on the basis of three

manuscripts and, as in his other works, devotes special attention to issues of terminology.

Marie-Geneviève Guesdon (Paris, BNF) dedicated her paper to methods of folios numbering used in Arabic manuscripts. Her foremost attention is paid to a special system of pagination by recording the first words of a new folio on the reverse side of the preceding folio in the lower left corner, beneath the final line of text. The material for her study was provided by manuscripts in the BNF which date from A.D. 1150 to 1450. The author notes how these designations (custodes) are distributed on the folios forming quires, how they are positioned in relation to the final line of text, and how they differ in manuscripts copied at various times. Quantitative results are given in table form.

Geneviève Humber (Paris) shows that in Arab manuscripts of the ninth to twelfth centuries A.D. one can find evidence of a codicological unit (*juz’*) unrelated to the logical division of the text. The *juz’* may be a large quire or small volume, most likely something in between a quire and a volume, neither wholly one nor the other. It is equipped with a title page which indicates its number, the title of the work, and the name of the author. The text begins on the reverse side of the title page with the *basmala* and breaks off on the final page with the colophon, after which, in most cases, the contents of the following *juz’* are listed. A *juz’* was usually stored without a binding. Apparently, it was convenient for copying and practical use for a limited time.

In “Illumination and its functions in Islamic manuscripts”, Muhammad Isa Waley of the British National Library surveys types of adornment and methods of adorning ordinary manuscripts. The author bases his analysis on the culture of “manuscript producing” rather than art history.

The second group of contributions, entitled “Copistes et écritures”, comprises seven papers.

In her “L’onciale penchée en copte et sa survie jusqu’au XV^e siècle en Haute-Égypte”, Anne Boud’hors (Paris) surveys seventeen philological manuscripts of the Sa’īdic tradition from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.

Two papers discuss the origins of Arabic writing and defend contrary opinions. François Briquel-Chatonnet (Paris) analyses the particular features of Aramaic and early-Arabic writing, taking into consideration the latest epigraphic discoveries and paying special attention to the general form and system of writing. She is inclined to sup-

port the theory of J. Starcky on the Syriac origin of Arabic writing, although she does not deny that there is greater similarity between Arabic and Nabatean letters. Valentina Colombo (Milan), on the contrary, supports the more widely accepted Nabatean theory on the origin of Arabic writing, relying on an analysis of the letter *alif* in inscriptions and the earliest Qur'ānic manuscripts. She also accepts the influence of the general form (*ductus*) of Syriac writing on Arabic and strives to reconcile the two views.

Paul Géhin (Paris) reports on the results of a detailed study of a bilingual Greek-Arabic manuscript in the BNF (Supplement grec 911). He establishes that it contains the text of the Gospels, copied in Italy or Sicily by a certain Euthymius in A.D. 1043. He notes that this manuscript, unique in its provenance, presents an outstanding example of Arabic Maghrib-Andalusian script. The author remarks that in the nineteenth century it belonged to the Holy Sepulchre library in Jerusalem. He also claims that two folios which had been torn out of it were brought to St. Petersburg by Porphyry Uspensky. At present, these folios are preserved as part of his collection found in the National Library of Russia (No. 290).

Dickran Kouymjian (Fresno, USA) presents a program for drawing up a new album of Armenian paleography with the use of computer technology.

Ramazan Şeşen (Istanbul) assesses the information contained in the colophons of Islamic manuscripts, beginning with the earliest Arab manuscripts and ending with Turkish examples from the eighteenth century. Drawing on materials from the enormously rich collections in Istanbul, he tries to show that the contents of colophons in the course of time became more detailed and diversified.

In an extremely brief paper, Gérard Troupeau (Paris) analyses data on the colophons of Christian-Arab manuscripts. In concise, general terms he lays out the chronology of manuscripts and confessional affiliation of the copyists — Coptic Jacobite, Greek Malkite or Syriac. Important terms are noted throughout the paper.

The third section is entitled "Transmission des textes". It consists of four papers.

A large paper by Eleazar Birnbaum (Toronto) contains a "methodological investigation of autographs" by Kātib

Çelebî, or Hājji Khalīfa (1609—1657). He stresses that in drawing up his two famous reference works, which to this day serve Islamicists, the Turkish bibliographer employed non-traditional methods. Kātib Çelebî observed strict alphabetical order in the arrangement of materials and used an original system of cards. Relying on the vast materials found in Istanbul and exhibiting exceptional industry, he collected a huge information extracted from an enormous number of historical, literary and biographical works.

C.-P. Haase (Kiel), in his paper describes his re-discovery of Piri Reis' seafaring maps surviving in an early manuscript in the library of Kiel University. The author compares it with published versions well known to scholars.

P. Orsatti (Rome) examines the ratio of manuscript to text in Persian lyric poetry and finds a mystical, talismanic significance in how the *makhlaṣ* ("refuge") — the dedication to the *mamdūh* — was recorded.

A. Sidarus (Evora, Portugal) presents in her paper the complex history and format of an extremely unusual Greek-Coptic-Arab philological manuscript from the BNF.

The fourth section, "Les bibliothèques et leur histoire", contains four papers.

Iraj Afshar analyses mentions of *'arḡs* (a writ addressed to a ruler or high official) in Persian manuscripts of the Indo-Iranian tradition. These mentions testify to a given manuscript's belonging to the royal or public (*vaqf*) libraries and aid in understanding their history. At the close of his work, the author provides two tables of data on the eleventh- and twelfth-century manuscripts under discussion.

G. Colas (Paris) tells of manuscripts which were brought from India by French Jesuits between 1729 and 1735. These include approximately 160 volumes, primarily manuscripts in the Telugu, Sanskrit and Tamil languages.

Finally, B. Martel-Thoumian (Montpellier) surveys manuscripts acquired by the Damascus library Zahīriya between 1943 and 1972, devoting special attention to historical works and the prices paid for them.

The section concludes with a bio-bibliographical reference work by S. T. Rasmussen on the history of Arabistic and Semitological studies in Denmark.

A. Khalidov

Francoise Briquel-Chatonnet. *Manuscripts syriaques. Catalogue*. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1997, 264 pp.

A new catalogue of Syriac manuscripts prepared by F. Briquel-Chatonnet, a noted French Semitologist and specialist on Syriac literature, offers readers descriptions of manuscripts held in the four most significant French collections — the Bibliothèque nationale de France, the Bibliothèque Méjanes d'Aix-en-Provence, the Bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, and the Bibliothèque nationale et universitaire de Strasbourg. The Bibliothèque nationale de Paris possesses the richest collection among them. The main body of this collection began to take shape already in the seventeenth century, while recent acquisitions date to the 1990s.

By the end of the nineteenth century, a large part of the Syriac collection — 288 items — had been described in H. Zotenberg's catalogue "Manuscripts orientaux. Catalogue des manuscrits syriaques et sabéens (mandaites) de la Bibliothèque nationale", Paris, 1874. To this day, all scholars of Syriac literature make grateful use of this catalogue. Those manuscripts which entered the collection between 1874 and 1911 (46 items) were described by J.-B. Chabot and F. Nau. The latter also equipped the Syriac catalogue of the Bibliothèque nationale with corrections and addenda. These reference sources remained inconvenient to use, however, as they were published in periodicals (*Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* and *Journal Asiatique*). They have not yet been re-published in a single edition, which would be most welcome.